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AGAWAM

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Voter ID, mail voting resolution headed for city council

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – A resolution filed by three Agawam City Councilors is creating a lot of buzz in the community and it has not even reached the council floor.

This Monday, April 5, the city council will take up a resolution supporting the institution of showing identification at election polling locations and the elimination of universal mail-in ballots that gained popularity in the presidential election last year. Mail-in ballots were very popular due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which made residents skeptical to come out to the polls fearing exposure to the virus that killed more than a half-million people in the country.

Councilor George Bitzas, along with co-sponsors Councilors Cecilia Calabrese and Mario Tedeschi sponsored the resolution, which appeared as new business at the March 15 city council meeting.

The resolution is not specifically binding in Agawam if the council were to pass it, and simply

“urges” the governor and Massachusetts legislature to take action on the issue.

In the resolution, Bitzas states that every American is required to use photo identification to do many things, including airports, banks, pharmacies, hotels, other travel, and for health insurance applications.

While that fact is very true, there are other points of contention that have created some opposition. The resolution states “mail-in ballots to every registered voter are creating confusion, chaos, and potential fraud.”

In this week's Agawam Advertiser News opinion page, found on pages 4 and 5, a number of opinions both ways can be found on the subject, including a letter by the three councilors petitioning for this.

One letter, from Corinne Wingard, states what has been widely reported throughout the country, which there is very little evidence of major voter fraud issues. The lack of evidence caused former President Donald Trump to be unsuccessful in 60 different

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A resolution filed by three Agawam City Councilors supports eliminating universal mail-in balloting. FILE PHOTO

Schools near full re-opening

By Shelby Macri
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AGAWAM – The School Committee meet on Tues. Mar. 23 to discuss the plans for re-opening schools as well as to review the academic plans that have been used throughout the semester so far.

Superintendent Shelia Hoffman explained all schools are continuing to work on plans to welcome students back to full in-person learning, and families will be receiving more specific information about the plan to return to in-person learning soon. Additionally, the Junior High School is planning to conduct school tours and other welcoming activities during the week of Mar. 29 to Apr. 1, with more information to come.

The schools will be closed on Apr. 2 for the observance of the Good Friday Holiday, and all Pre-K to 12 students will return to school in person on Mon. Apr. 5.

Schools are still offering remote learning for students who have signed up to continue the remainder of the year online. Hoffman gave the percentage of remote learners by schools; with the Early Childhood Center having 14%, Granger has 9%, Clark

has 7%, Phelps has 13%, Robinson has 9%, Doering has 14%, the Junior High has 15%, and the High School has 37% of students who chose to remain remote.

There was a report made by the math and instruction coaches for kindergarten through fourth grade, explaining how they set up education plans for in-person and remote students during this

“All schools are working on plans to welcome back students.”

– Shelia Hoffman

semester. In the report the coaches outlined that they used nine new technology tools; including Nearpod, Google Forms, Interactive Google Slides, Literacy Footprints, Audio Voice Recorders, and more. Coaches were able to put together 114 Math and ELA daily slideshows for K through 12, 145 education puzzles for grades three and four, and 245 Nearpods for grades three and four for ELA.

These instructional coaches were able to find specific needs for hybrid and remote learners in

K through fourth grade; including the need for explicit instruction and guided practice, accessible independent work, including feedback for teachers, as well as meaningful and rich asynchronous lessons. For these needs the content team's teachers and coaches created lessons to be used across buildings for each grade level, with the motto that if everyone does a little then no one has to do a lot. They also created more consistency in planning across grade levels throughout the district, which is critical for remote learners.

The coaches discussed curriculum planning and pacing where lessons were added to district level curriculum maps for each grade, and both coaches and teacher leaders prioritized standards and skills to focus on at each grade level. The adapted the pacing to meet students needs and determined which lessons and activities were best taught live versus asynchronously, especially for remote students. Through all the struggles of the unique school year the team found ways to celebrate things and see silver linings; like sharing knowledge and ideas between

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Fire department installing free smoke detectors

By Shelby Macri
smacri@turley.com

AGAWAM – The Agawam Fire Department is partnering with the American Red Cross to provide free smoke alarm to residents of Agawam and Feeding Hills.

There are eligibility requirements for receiving the free alarms; mainly that people must be a resident or own and reside in the residence in Agawam or Feeding Hills, and the smoke detectors must be battery operated rather than hardwired. Additionally, current detectors must be absent from the residence or must be greater than 10 years old. Residents must also allow Agawam Fire Department personnel into the home to install the detectors.

Fire Chief Alan Sirois said anyone in town can apply, but that the department will target those who can't obtain a detector for themselves. The department has held events like this in the past where they focused on elderly residents, but the difference this year is that all residents are able to apply for a detector.

The department typically holds a free smoke alarm event every two or three years, but it's

mainly based on funding. If there is no funding for the smoke detectors, they don't hold the event, this year American Red Cross helped to fund smoke detectors for the town.

“We're especially getting a list of interested persons for now as we don't have the smoke detectors currently. When we get the alarms, we'll call people back to make an appointment to install them,” Sirois said. “Smoke detectors save lives, having them are the factor of life and death. It serves as an early warning system.”

The Red Cross is helping to provide both carbon monoxide and fire alarms, though the department isn't aware of the type of alarms. It could be a fire alarm with the carbon monoxide alarm within it, or it could be two separate alarms. The department won't know the type of alarm offered until they receive the alarms in about a month, though Red Cross confirmed they'd give both kinds.

While there is no specific or hard deadline to apply, Sirois strongly encourages interested

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Town hall to re-open April 5

AGAWAM – Mayor William Sapelli would like to announce that starting on Monday, April 5 all town buildings with the exception of the Senior Center will reopen for public access. There will be designated staff in the lobby of the Town Hall to ensure social distancing as well as capacity limits are being followed. Mayor Sapelli would like to encourage people to continue utilizing the drop boxes provided in front of Town Hall, visit the website to pay online, or utilize US mail services. Please note that only one person per time will

be allowed into the Treasurer/Collectors Office.

On April 5, 2021, all Agawam Public Schools will reopen to five days per week with all students back. We expect traffic may be heavy during drop off and pick up times. Please be patient and follow drop off rules and procedures. Please remember dropping off and picking up at the library is not an option.

Please contact the Mayor’s office with any questions or concerns 413-726-9729.

Agawam resident works on ecology project

WESTFIELD — Westfield State University Assistant Professor of Environmental Science Lauren DiCarlo, Ph.D., presented an invasive plant management project to the Westfield Conservation Commission on Feb. 23. The proposal was a capstone project for Westfield State student Nicolas Pietroniro ’20, who was the first student to graduate with the University’s new restoration ecology minor.

The student-led proposal seeks to remove invasive species on Westfield State- and state-owned properties at three sites along the Westfield and Little rivers.

“The Conservation Commission approved the proposal, meaning that we now have a permit to start the project,” explained DiCarlo. “The project will begin in the next few weeks, with students removing invasives down by the Westfield River and will continue for the next five years. At that time we can file to renew the permit.”

Within 10 feet of the rivers, plants may only be cut, but elsewhere there may be root removal. The most prevalent of invasive species is the Japanese burning bush, but others include knotweed, privet, oriental bittersweet, garlic mustard, Japanese barberry, common buckwheat, and multi-flora rose.

“This project was Nick’s capstone for the restoration ecology minor, which I advise. I have known Nick for several years,” said DiCarlo. “We first started to discuss the project at the beginning of the fall 2020 semester.”

As DiCarlo and Pietroniro contacted several individuals and local organizations to provide feedback on the project, they also reached out to Karen Leigh, a Westfield State instructor who teaches the University’s “Environmental Science Wetlands” course.

A native of Agawam, Pietroniro earned a B.S. in environmental science and will begin his career in the field this upcoming spring. He wrote the proposal and collected data during the fall semester to submit the project for approval in December 2020. After approval from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, it was shared with the Westfield Conservation Commission.

The project is just one example of the research collaborations between students and faculty at Westfield State University.

“Student-faculty collaborative projects give students an opportunity to take their own original project and push it to the next level,” said Pietroniro. “In this project, Dr. DiCarlo gave me the opportunity to take my project further than I could have on my own.”

Said DiCarlo: “The project will not only benefit the City of Westfield and the Westfield State campus, but will also provide many students hands-on experience in invasive species removal. There are also many other opportunities for faculty and students to build off the project and conduct additional field research.”

As invasive species are one of the greatest threats to ecosystems, DiCarlo believes that many students in the environmental science field will work with them in their careers.

“These opportunities could include developing plans to remove invasives and restore habitat for a nonprofit or government organization, or developing Notice of Intent proposals, such as this one, for a consulting firm,” DiCarlo said.

The Westfield State University Environmental Science Department has 150 students and each class will participate in the field project in groups of 18–24 individuals.

“Working with wetlands and permitting is a rewarding and popular career choice among environmental science students,” said Pietroniro. “This is partly due to protective laws in Massachusetts aimed at preserving wetlands and waterways. In this project, a lot of the work that was done resembles what people in wetland permitting, habitat assessment, and ecological restoration fields do.”

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lawsuits against several states he lost in the 2020 election.

Bitzas further states in his resolution that an exception was created in 2020 to allow for mail-in ballots due to the pandemic, and the state needs to get back to standard, in-person voting, which should include voter identification.

Bitzas believes having to show identification will unify Americans by creating elections that have transparency and integrity.

Opponents to such laws believe they suppress voting among minorities and elderly residents.

“No other country in the world uses a mail-in voting system without verification of identification of the person purporting to cast a ballot,” states Bitzas. “Universal mail-in ballots create ambiguity in the results when there is no authentication of electors. Congress is debating HB 1/SB 1 that would bring universal mail-in voting on a Nationwide level. This would irreparably damage our American voting system and place the United States at a distinct Global disadvantage compared to European nations that require stringent voter identification in order to cast ballots.”

Wingard’s opinion disputes that, stating Agawam’s current voting system is perfectly adequate.

“I do not see any purpose in introducing this divisive partisan Resolution,” states Wingard. “I believe it has the potential to cause unproductive controversy in Agawam, hindering our ability to work together on a nonpartisan basis for the good of our town, as we have done for years.”

The resolution makes no mention of early voting. Which is in-person voting that takes place in the two weeks leading up to the election. Early voting has been very popular as well.

The resolution does not seek the elimination of traditional absentee balloting.

ARREST LOG

The Agawam Police Department responded to 911 calls for service from Mar. 22 to Mar. 28 and recorded the following arrests. No arrests in the public log have been omitted. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty.

Thursday, March 25

Charles Wright, 26, of 21 Dwight St., Agawam, was arrested for possession of a Class A drug.

Friday, March 26

Tyriek Jordan Marsh, 21, 17 Patricia Circle, Springfield, was arrested at 9:09 p.m. for negligent operation of a motor vehicle.

Saturday, March 27

Kim Shute, 57, of 1165 Halladay Avenue, was arrested at 10:19 a.m. for operating under the influence of liquor and negligent operation of a motor vehicle.

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parties to call as soon as possible to show their interest in obtaining a detector.

Interested parties can call 413-786-0657 extension 2, or go online to the town’s website on the fire department tab. The department will be holding the interest gauge for 30 days and will stop taking names at the end of Apr., as they’re hoping to receive the smoke alarms by then.

Sirois expressed that the department would like to get this project going as fast as possible and hopes to receive the smoke detectors by the end of Apr. or beginning of May. He wants this project to happen sooner rather than later and encourages all those who need an alarm but cannot get one on their own to contact the department and add their names to the forming list of interested parties.

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DPW issues guidance for spring cleanups

AGAWAM – The Agawam Department of Public Works is reminding residents to be mindful when doing spring cleanups in their yards.

Spring Yard Waste Care and Water Quality

Spring has arrived, which means many residents will be outside cleaning up their yards. Together, all these yards produce large amounts of stormwater runoff after a rainfall. Stormwater runoff, rain or snow-melt that soaks into exposed soil or remains on top of impervious surfaces such as pavement and rooftops, eventually flows into our local streams, rivers and ponds. Stormwater runoff has become a major and fast growing source of pollution that affects every watershed. According to the U.S. EPA, nitrogen and phosphorus are two of the most troublesome pollutants in stormwater runoff and are considered the primary cause of water quality problems in our lakes, ponds and streams. Although nitrogen and phosphorus are nutrients that are natural parts of the ecosystem, too much in the water causes algae to grow faster than our ecosystems can handle, harming the water quality. Managing stormwater where it's created, in our own backyard, can help curb stormwater pollution.

Spring Cleanup

Mulch or compost fallen leaves and garden trimmings so they don't get washed away during a spring storm. A mulch-mower is ideal for retaining and spreading clippings on your lawn. Clippings decompose quickly, providing important nutrients for the lawn and reducing the need for nitrogen fertilizers.

Dog waste has been cited as one of the largest contributors of bacterial pollution in our waterways. Pick up pet waste to keep your yard healthy and protect our waterways.

Direct roof drains away from paved areas to help encourage infiltration and reduce stormwater runoff from your property.

Patch Grass

Inspect lawn for bare spots. A thick lawn produces less runoff than a thin lawn with exposed soil. Reseed grass mid-spring, when the threat of frost is past due.

Test Soil

Excess fertilizer will not improve grass growth and could pollute local waterways. Consider testing your soil. A soil test lets you know what your lawn and garden really need in terms of nutrients. For more information about having your soil tested, visit the UMass Cooperative Extension web page www.ag.umass.edu/services/soil-plant-nutrient-testing-laboratory

Lawn Care

Maximize slow-release nitrogen fertilizer. Slow-release nitrogen limits nutrient runoff. This should be applied in the spring, not autumn, to provide a steady source of nutrients throughout the growing season. Additionally, consider organic alternatives to chemicals, such as compost or manure.

Mow Sharp and High. A sharp mower blade cuts grass cleanly which improves turf health and promotes denser growth. Mow your lawn often enough so no more than 1/2 the length of the grass is removed. Taller grass has deeper roots - preventing erosion, suppressing weeds and helping the rain soak into the ground.

Aerate Turf. Grass does best, and traps more stormwater, when it grows in loose soils. Many lawns are the opposite, compacted from years of heavy use, including outdoor parties, riding mowers, even parked cars. Core aeration is a process that removes finger sized soil plugs from the top layer of a lawn so air and rain water can support better root growth.

Sweep Away Clippings and Fertilizer

Keep clippings and leaves out of the street and storm drains. Keeping clippings out of the streets and storm drains will have significant benefits for our local water ways.

Use a leaf blower or sweep away loose grass clippings and fertilizer granules off sidewalks and driveways onto your lawn where they can do good.

Plant Trees and Shrubs

Spring is a great time to plant native trees and shrubs which provide important water quality benefits. Both reduce stormwater when their leaves intercept rainfall, increase infiltration when their roots penetrate the soil, and filter pollutants that gradually develop beneath their canopy.

On Monday, April 12th, the Department of Public Works will commence its Spring Yard Waste Collection. Yard Waste Collection takes place on recycling weeks, only on the days identified on the current 2021 collection schedule.

A Week Streets will be collected on their recycling collection day on the following weeks:

April 19-23
May 17-21
June 28-July 2
August 23-27

B Week Streets will be collected on their recycling collection day on the following weeks:

April 12-16
May 10-14
June 21-25
August 16-20

Residents must put their yard waste out by 6:30 am on their scheduled collection day.

Yard Waste is defined as:

Grass clippings, leaves, weeds, shrub trimmings, and brush or limbs under 3" in diameter.

Acceptable Yard Waste preparation:

30-gallon biodegradable brown bags
Bundled branches and brush up to 3 inches in diameter and up to 3' in length, no heavier than 40 lbs bundled with organic twine.

Barrels no heavier than 40 lbs marked as Yard Waste

Not acceptable:

Bundles tied with wire, nylon or plastic (these items harm grinding equipment)
Bundles heavier than 40 lbs
Brush and limbs greater than 3" in diameter
Yard waste bags contaminated with rocks, soil, or wood chips

Tougias to share newest book

AGAWAM – The Agawam Library is pleased to host best-selling author Michael Tougias once again on April 12 at 7 p.m. His newest book *The Waters Between Us* has been described as "Unforgettable" and a "song of praise to the outdoors". Tougias will give a virtual, multi-media presentation called *Growing Up Wild* in the 1960's and 1970's in Western Massachusetts. His talk will recount elements of his book and engage the audience with his experiences growing up along the Connecticut River in the Pioneer Valley.

Tougias is a New York Times Bestselling author and co-author of 31 books for adults, and 6 for young adults and children. Among his bestsellers are *There's A Porcupine In My Outhouse* (Winner of the Independent Publishers "Best Nature Book of the Year"), *Ten Hours Until Dawn* and *The Finest Hours* (inspiration for a 2016 Disney movie). He has received many writing awards.

Please join us on Monday evening, April 12 at 7 p.m. for this special virtual event. Patrons can register on our online calendar at www.agawamlibrary.org or by calling 413-789-1550 ext. 4. The event Zoom link will be sent to participants on the day of the event. This event is free and everyone is welcome.

Feline Friends benefits from bag fundraiser

AGAWAM – Community Grange #382 located at 47 North West Street in Feeding Hills, will hold an indoor Tag Sale on Saturday, April 10 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Grange members will be selling their treasures. The sale will benefit the building fund. Please wear a mask and practice social distancing.

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Opinion

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Will inheritance money affect my Social Security?

By Russell Gloor
Guest columnist

Dear Rusty: I will turn 66 this year and am considering claiming my Social Security. I have already applied for Medicare. My parents passed on several years ago, and the estate will probably settle this year. I would like to know if my inheritance money will have any effect on my Social Security benefits. If so, how? Signed: Wondering Heir

Dear Wondering: No, your inheritance money from your parents' estate will not affect your gross Social Security benefit in any way. Your monthly Social Security benefit is based solely on your lifetime earnings record from working, and income from other sources is not counted when computing your Social Security benefit amount. But if you claim your benefits and have your Medicare Part B premium deducted from your Social Security payment, it's possible your inheritance could affect your Medicare Part B premium amount, thus lowering your net Social Security payment.

Most Medicare beneficiaries pay a standard premium of \$148.50 per month (2021 amount) for Part B, which is coverage for doctors and other outpatient services. But there is also a special provision known as "IRMAA" (Income Related Medicare Adjustment Amount) which adds a supplemental amount to the standard Part B premium if your "provisional income" from all sources exceeds certain levels. Your "provisional income" would include income from all sources, including any money you receive from an inheritance, any tax-advantage investment withdrawals, tax-free interest, and half of the Social Security benefits you received during the tax year. The name for this is your "Modified Adjusted Gross Income" (MAGI), and the clip levels which cause IRMAA to affect your Medicare premium are different depending on your IRS filing status.

If you file your income tax as "married/jointly" and your MAGI is over \$176,000, then IRMAA will apply and you'll pay a higher Medicare premium thus reducing your net Social Security payment (if you file as a single, the clip level is \$88,000). IRMAA can cause your Part B premium to go to anywhere from \$208 to \$505 per month, depending upon how high your MAGI is. Note that your Medicare premium for the current year is determined by your MAGI from two years prior, so if that inheritance money is reported on your 2021 income tax return, it would be your 2023 Medicare premium amount that would be affected. And the higher Medicare premium would self-adjust back to a lower level if MAGI for subsequent years are below the IRMAA level.

The other way your inheritance might affect you is through income taxes on your Social Security benefits. If your MAGI exceeds \$32,000 filing as married/jointly (\$25,000 if single), then 50% of your Social Security benefits will become part of your taxable income. Or if your MAGI is more than \$44,000 filing as married/jointly (\$34,000 if single), then up to 85% of your Social Security benefits for the tax year will become part of your taxable income at your standard IRS tax rate.

The bottom line is this: Your gross monthly Social Security benefit amount will not be affected by your inheritance, but if your inheritance increases your Medicare Part B premium your net SS benefit will be temporarily lower. And the inheritance may also influence how much of your Social Security benefits are subjected to income tax.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



Letters to the Editor

Resolution is divisive and should be withdrawn

Dear Editor:

Regarding TR-2021-20, A Resolution in support of Voter Identification and Legal Absentee Ballots and Opposition to Universal Mail-In Ballots for every registered voter, I think we can all agree that we want honest and fair elections in our town, state, and country. What we do not all agree about is whether or not we have them. Election integrity and voter suppression are hot-button,

controversial, partisan issues dividing our country, which is why I cannot understand why this resolution has been introduced to our Agawam City Council.

Agawam has a proud history of non-partisan elections, which have served us very well. I do not see any purpose in introducing this divisive partisan resolution. I believe it has the potential to cause unproductive controversy in Agawam, hinder-

ing our ability to work together on a nonpartisan basis for the good of our town, as we have done for years.

Let me be clear that I am not taking a position on election integrity vs. voter suppression here. My concern is how it may affect our town. Based on this I ask the sponsors to reconsider and withdraw this resolution.

Sincerely,
Corinne M. Wingard

Secure integrity in our voting system

Dear Editor:

John Adams, of Braintree, Massachusetts was the Principal Author of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Our State Constitution went into effect almost 241 years ago (October 25, 1780), and served as a model upon which the Constitution of the United States was fashioned years later. The Massachusetts Constitution remains as the oldest written, functioning constitution effective in the world today. An integral part of the Massachusetts Constitution defines how we determine our elected officials: by majority vote of we, The People. There is a move to dilute the voting rights of Massachusetts citizens through the efforts to institute universal mail-in voting, permanently.

Chapter 115 of the Acts of 2020 created a narrow modification to the 240-year legacy of our voting system in Massachusetts by permitting all voters to be eligible to vote by mail because of the COVID-19 pandemic. That legislation served its purpose, and now it is time

to return to the voting system that served us so well for more than 2 centuries. In Massachusetts, we vote in-person unless there is illness or other reason why a voter is unable to attend the polls at Election Time.

No other country in the world uses a mail-in voting system without verification of identification of the person purporting to cast a ballot. Universal mail-in ballots create ambiguity in the results when there is no authentication of electors. Congress is debating HB 1/SB 1 that would bring universal mail-in voting on a Nationwide level. This would irreparably damage our American voting system and place the United States at a distinct Global disadvantage compared to European nations that require stringent voter identification in order to cast ballots.

The high cost of universal mail-in voting creates an unfunded mandate to cities and towns. That cost must be absorbed by the tax payers. Further, photo identification is required for a multitude of other activities without question: in

airports, banks, pharmacies, medical offices, liquor and cannabis purchases, hotels, Medicare/Medicaid applications just to name a few. Doesn't our most sacred duty as a Citizen deserve the same respect?

With COVID-19 vaccinations being widely distributed within the Commonwealth and based upon recent pandemic data Massachusetts will be able to safely conduct elections in person. The provisions of absentee voting for those not available or physically unable to vote in person will remain intact, just as they have for decades. No one will be denied their voting rights by assuring the integrity of every legal vote.

Voting is not just one of our most important rights, it is our sacred duty. Doesn't that deserve integrity? We say, yes.

Respectfully,
George Bitzas, Agawam City Councilor
Cecilia P. Calabrese, Agawam City Councilor
Mario Tedeschi, Agawam City Councilor

Voting is a civil right

Dear Editor:

I am standing up and speaking out against the resolution supporting Voter ID and opposition to mail in balloting in Agawam by City Councilor George Bitzas, Councilor Calabrese, and Councilor Tedeschi. According to the Heritage Foundation and The Brennan Center 'the right to vote in a free and fair

election is a civil right'. Democracy requires everyone to participate. Requiring a photo ID to vote is the equivalent of a poll tax and creates a barrier to voting. Councilor Bitzas statement about all other world countries requiring ID to vote is a lie. For example: Finland, Australia and the UK do not require an ID to vote. Extensive research reveals

voter fraud is rare. Mail in balloting is secure, increases voter participation and is essential to holding a safe election especially in a pandemic.

I see your resolution as a means of voter suppression. What are you afraid of Councilors?

Roberta Miller

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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YESTERDAY’S HOMETOWN NEWS

This time, Eddie

The Dec. 10, 2020 column was about our late WWII hero Eddie Neilson. Unfortunately, the last few lines of the column didn’t get published so here they are: Eddie’s classmates put these words under his yearbook picture: “The smile that won’t wear off” That’s the way Eddie lived his life.

Sandy (Drzyzga) Ashton called to thank the Advertiser News for the Drzyzga Legacy column. Since I had seen in the 1955 Manning’s Directory that her dad William Drzyzga had worked at Jaycox Restaurant, I was curious about what he had done there. Sandy said that he was a chef and Theodore Geisel, Dr. Seuss, was one of the customers her dad had cooked for. A couple of days later all the Dr. Seuss controversies hit the media and the Geisel name came up on the news every day. I’m pretty sure AHS had a student with the Geisel last name quite a long time ago but Larry Scherpa couldn’t find a Geisel in his master list of AHS graduates. Call me if you know the yearbook the Geisel name is in. Must be an underclassman. There may not be any wrestling this year. Can you think of a worse sport for contagious anything?

Another COVID casualty. Our granddaughter Olivia Salva was supposed to play the role of Peter Pan in the 2020 AHS school musical. She had been Dorothy in the junior high Wizard of Oz. That can’t be taken away.

Marty McMahon ’63 in a recent letter told me that his sister Patty ’65 was the homecoming queen one of her years at UMass.

Rosemary Stratton, chair-person of our Athletic Hall of Fame committee, said that the committee isn’t sure of what to do or how fast to do it. Limbo might be a good description. We both agreed that the banquet is too popular to skip. You can still nominate someone or a team.

Have you seen Cavallon and Pandolfi

trucks around town?

George Bourgeois ’63 gave us Ted Robinson’s phone number down in Florida. Ted’s sister Judy is still in Feeding Hills.

How many times did I see Mr. Cushing running on the side of the road?

We’re trying to find out what happened to the Herlihy girls who sang with the Belcher girls back in the 50’s. It should make a good story. (The Herlihy’s were from Springfield).

The recent Mardi Gras reminded me of Mrs. Sears telling our French class that Mardi

Gras meant Fat Tuesday and that Catholics could eat as much as they wanted on Tuesday but not the next day which was Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent when you gave up something. e.g. eating chocolate.

Jolene Mercadante has some great dog pictures on our library wall.

Mathematical coincidences intrigue me. Recently I was following a car down Mill St., headed east toward the high school. The license plate on the car read MASSAI and I was still behind it as we passed the southern end of Franklin St. MASSA was Rosemary Stratton’s maiden name and she grew up at 515 Franklin St. Extension. Now you’d think that Franklin St. Extension would be right across the street from the end of Franklin St. but it isn’t. It’s maybe a half mile away off Silver St. Back in 1955 there were only about nine houses on the Extension and they all had high house numbers. Most of what would have been Franklin St. Extension got taken by route 57 and 475 was the lowest house number on Rosemary’s street.

Peter Shibley called and we talked about him helping me learn the locations of the stores and markets on Springfield St. back in 1955.

If Virginia Kibbe didn’t go right to heaven it must have a pretty low population. Rest in peace to a wonderful lady.



Walt Willard

NHS hosting clothing exchange for kids

AGAWAM – Agawam High School’s SAVE Club and National Honor Society, along with Agawam’s Zero Waste Club, are hosting their 3rd annual Kids’ Used Clothing Exchange. This event was created to normalize the reuse of clothing that remains in good condition.

Clean, gently used, kids’ clothing will be collected at the Agawam Public Library, 750 Cooper St., on Tuesday April 6, from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. All types of clothing from infant through teen styles, are desired. No footwear, including shoes, boots or sneakers will be accepted. All donations will be prescreened before donors leave.

General, free, public shopping of this clothing will take place outdoors on Saturday, April 10, by appointment only, at the Agawam Public Library Parking Lot from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Rain date for the free shopping is Saturday, April 17.

Shoppers are asked to bring reusable shopping bags, as this is a zero-waste event. Any clothing that remains will be donated to local charities.

To make an appointment to free shop for clothing, visit AgawamLibrary.org under Events & Activities and register, or call 413-789-1550. For more information, email AgawamZeroWaste@gmail.com

LETTERS ■ from page 4

No proof fraud existed in election

Dear Editor:

This letter is in response to Resolution TR2021-20, supported by three members of the Agawam City Council: Ms. Calabrese, Mr. Bitzas, and Mr. Tedeschi. The sponsors of that resolution do not support universal mail-in ballots (UMB) and would want voter-id verification. In the last election, after all the rhetoric and bluster, no proof of any significant fraud by anyone involved with counting votes was ever found in any state. Court after court rejected case after case.

UMB helps people who have to work on election day, are out of town for business or vacation, people who need child care, people who can’t get a ride to the polls, and people who are disabled and can’t leave the house or if they can, they cannot stand in line for hours.

There are other good solid, supporting arguments to keep UMB and the current voter-id processes. First, with UMB, we satisfy voter identity at the time the voter registers, and again when we send each

registered voter one ballot and finally when that completed ballot is received. Voting is completed at home instead of traveling to a polling station and then waiting in line to vote. Secondly, there is proof in other states that it works. For example, Oregon and Colorado have been using UMB without issues since 2000 and 2013, respectively. And last, but certainly not least, the implication that UMB and current voter-id processes in Massachusetts are not trustworthy or fair fails because it provides no evidence of fraud. As a matter of fact, the opposite has been proven by the certification of mail-in ballots in all 50 states and by the testimony given under oath by Christopher Ray, the head of the FBI.

It is our opinion that UMB can be trusted. We were able to verify that our votes had been counted via Mass.gov website, something we’ve never been able to do in previous elections.

Bob Kadis
Dave and Jackie Owens
Jose and Marjolaine Linares

Library holding kids poem contest

AGAWAM – Calling all kids and teens: Write a poem, enter to win a free book. The contest will be active from April 1 to 30. In April we celebrate National Poetry Month and National Library Week from April 4 to 10.

Can you write your own acrostic poem using the word “Spring?” An acrostic poem is a poem that uses all the letters in a word or name as the first letter of each line of the poem.

You can write about things you love about spring or things your love about the

library.

Send a PDF copy of your poem (or a picture of your poem) to agawamchildrenslibrary@gmail.com OR drop it in the box in the lobby and we will put it on our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/AgawamChildrensLibrary.

Participants will be entered to win a free book.

If you have questions please call the Children’s Room at the Agawam Library at 413-789-1550 ext. 3.

New homeschooling books available at Agawam Public Library

AGAWAM – This school year has been challenging. If your child in grades K- 6 is struggling, the Agawam Library can help. The Agawam Library has recently added to their collection a series of books that can help kids in grades K -6 with science, social studies, and geography.

This book series is called “180 Days.” Each book is tailored to a specific grade level and covers either science, social studies or geography. The books are published by Shell Education and include worksheets to reinforce the topics that are covered. Patrons are asked not to write in the books,

but to make copies of the pages they want to use.

There are no restrictions on how many can be checked out at one time, but we ask you only take what you need and leave the others for someone else to use.

To get these books you could call the library at 413-789-1550 ext. 3 and ask for them to be held for you, or make an appointment to come into the library to browse these books or other books in our Parent/Teacher Resource section. The Agawam Library is located at 750 Cooper Street, Agawam MA 01001.

Crafters needed for St. John’s first-ever outdoor fair

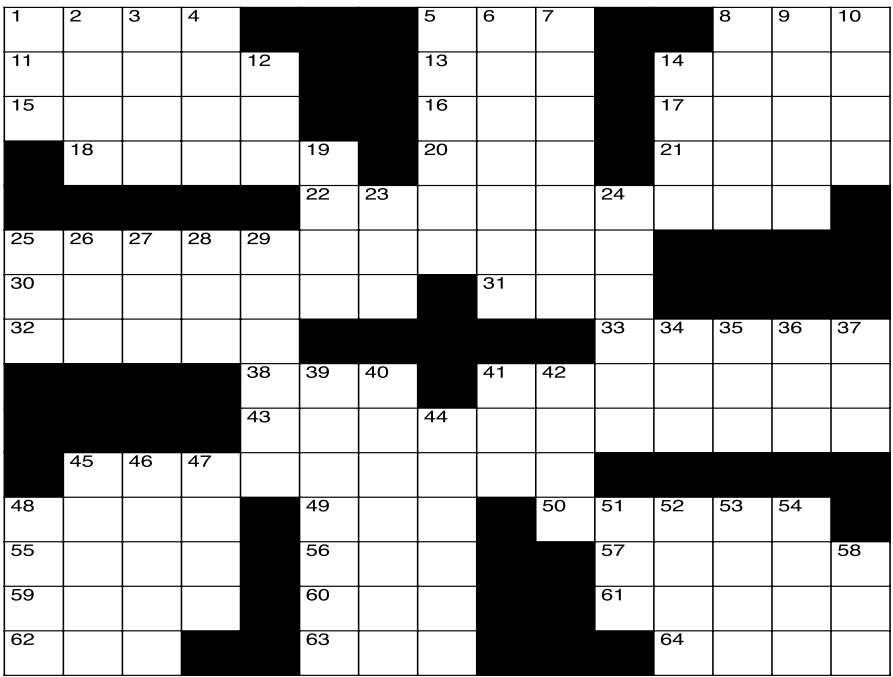
AGAWAM – St. John the Evangelist Church is excited to host its first-ever Outdoor Craft Fair, Saturday, May 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., 833 Main Street, Agawam. Crafters are welcome to request an application by contacting Andreana Perkins, 413.786.8105, or sje.information@gmail.com. A rain date is set for May 8.

There is a \$35 non-refundable fee, and a request for one craft item to be donated to

the Raffle Tent (value of \$20).

Crafters will have access to a designated 10 x 10 outdoor space, which will include a six-foot table and chair. There are limited number of spaces with electricity that are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Interested crafters can contact Andreana Perkins at 413.786-8105, or sje.information@gmail.com.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Now and __
 - 5. Israeli city __ Aviv
 - 8. Indicates near
 - 11. Minneapolis suburb
 - 13. Large Australian flightless bird
 - 14. Fine-grained earth
 - 15. Plant genus that includes water caltrop
 - 16. Peacock network
 - 17. TV writer Dunham
 - 18. Excessive fluid accumulation in tissues
 - 20. They __
 - 21. Muslim ruler title
 - 22. Position given in respect of
 - 25. Explaining further
 - 30. Measuring instrument
 - 31. Romanian monetary unit
 - 32. Council of __, 1545-
- 1563
 - 33. Savory jelly made with meat stock
 - 38. Journalist Tarbell
 - 41. Most suspenseful
 - 43. Festivity
 - 45. Animal embryos
 - 48. Fertility god
 - 49. Medical patients' choice (abbr.)
 - 50. Type of sword
 - 55. Competition
 - 56. Bird of the cuckoo family
 - 57. Afflicted in mind or body
 - 59. Engineering organization
 - 60. Beverage receptacle
 - 61. Spiritual leader
 - 62. Doctor of Education
 - 63. Where golfers begin
 - 64. Impudence

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Vietnamese offensive

- 2. Fast mammal
- 3. Oh goodness!
- 4. The back of one's neck
- 5. One who lives in another's property
- 6. Involve deeply
- 7. Alfalfa
- 8. Tropical tree resin
- 9. Sudden fear
- 10. Jewish religious month
- 12. Veterans battleground
- 14. Musical symbol
- 19. German river
- 23. Paddle
- 24. Lizard
- 25. Shock treatment
- 26. The common gibbon
- 27. Brew
- 28. Usually has a lid
- 29. Lenses in optical instruments
- 34. Time zone in
- Samoa (abbr.)
- 35. Wrinkled dog: Shar __
- 36. Denotes equal
- 37. TV network for children
- 39. Take the value away from
- 40. Female graduates
- 41. Don't know when yet
- 42. “ __ tú”: Spanish song
- 44. “Seinfeld” character
- 45. Bleated
- 46. Entwined
- 47. Away from wind
- 48. Soft creamy white cheese
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Prejudice
- 53. Actor Idris
- 54. They resist authority (slang)
- 58. Speak ill of

Vaccine clinics ramp up

HOLYOKE – The Veterans Affairs recently held a vaccine clinic at the War Memorial. Area veterans were able to come to the clinic to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. More clinics should be coming as the vaccine rollout gets bigger.



From left; Angela Taylor gives veteran Paul Babino his first set of vaccines at the Holyoke War Memorial.



There is a section on stage where the vaccines are thawed out and immediately distributed to the vaccine stations.



Veteran Lisa Belanger gets her first vaccine from Angela Taylor.



From left; Matt Savoie gives veteran Ronald Holmes his first vaccine.



The main hall of the Holyoke War Memorial building was transformed into a multi-station vaccine clinic for Veteran's on Tuesday, March 9. PHOTOS BY SHELBY MACRI

Lions Club offering scholarship

AGAWAM – The Agawam Lions Club and Attorney David Ladizki are proud to announce the establishment of two memorial scholarships administered by the Agawam Lions Club Scholarship Committee. These scholarships for graduating Agawam High School seniors will honor local residents and Lions club members David and Beverly Malone Ladizki and Albert and Francis Malone.

The total amount of each scholarship is \$1,000.00 all of which will be funded by Attorney Ladizki's generous donation to our community. Applications are available thru the High School Guidance Office.

Deadline nearing for Agawam Rotary Club scholarships

AGAWAM – The application deadline for the Agawam Rotary Club scholarships is April 1. Applications can be downloaded from www.agawamrotary.org and mailed to Agawam Rotary Club, PO Box 587, Agawam, MA 01001.

The Agawam Rotary Club is proud to offer the following scholarships:

Beverly M. Ladizki and David A. Ladizki scholarship for a graduating senior from Agawam who is planning to continue their education, and with intent to attend law school This includes students graduating from Pope Francis Preparatory school.

Ray and Reita McCarroll Memorial Scholarship is for a graduating senior from Agawam who will be attending or scheduled to attend an accredited academic or technical college in the month of September following graduation from high school.

Andrew Gallano Scholarship For The Arts is for a graduating senior from Agawam pursuing a career in the cultural arts, such as painting, music, and drama.

Charles H. Heyl Vocational/Technical Scholarship/Grant for an Agawam resident, not necessarily a graduating high school senior, who is pursuing an education in a technical or vocational field, including but not limited to cosmetology, welding, culinary arts, and automotive technology. The scholarship may also be used for the purpose of purchasing tools or equipment to become established in their trade.

Rotary is an international service organization whose principal motto is "Service Above Self."

Sacred Heart Church announces Holy Week schedule

Holy (Maundy) Thursday – April 1:

Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7 p.m. followed by the procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar of Repose in the Chapel. Solemn Adoration will continue in the chapel until 9 p.m.

Good Friday – April 2:

Stations of the Cross at noon.

Solemn Celebration of the Lord's Passion, Veneration of the Cross and the Distribution of Holy Communion at 7 p.m.

Holy Saturday – April 3:

Blessing of the Easter Food and Children's Easter Baskets at noon in front of the Parish Center.

The Great Vigil of Easter at 7:30 p.m. – This is the most important Mass of the entire Church year.

Easter Sunday – April 4:

(including the renewal of Baptismal Promises) at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Covid seating capacity and regulations are still in force.

St. John's Easter weekend mass schedule set

AGAWAM – St. John the Evangelist Church, 833 Main Street, Agawam, announces the following schedule for Holy Week 2021:

Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper: April 1, 7 p.m.

Good Friday, Celebration of the Lord's Passion: April 2, 7 p.m.

Easter Vigil: April 3, 8 p.m.

Easter Sunday: April 4, 8 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. (Extraordinary Form)

Social distancing and face coverings will be observed.

For more information about St. John the Evangelist Church, visit www.stjohnagawam.com, and subscribe to the YouTube channel (search St. John the Evangelist Church Agawam) for fun videos, informational videos, as well as daily and weekend livestream Masses.

Valley Press Club scholarship applications being accepted

REGION – The Valley Press Club, based in Springfield, Mass., will award up to six \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors in Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut who are interested in pursuing a career in journalism.

The Valley Press Club Scholarships, funded by contributions and dues to the Press Club, are for students planning careers in print, online or broadcast journalism.

The Republican Scholarship, funded by The Republican, is for students living within the newspaper's circulation area who are planning careers in print journalism.

The 22News Scholarship, funded by WWLP-22News is for students planning careers in broadcast journalism.

The Edward J. Malley Jr. Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of a chief photographer for the Springfield Newspapers, is for students planning careers in photojournalism.

The Rhonda Swan Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of the award-winning journalist, editor and author, is for students who are underrepresented, in the Springfield, Mass. area, planning careers in journalism.

The Al Jaffe Scholarship, funded by Mr. Jaffe, the Valley Press Club's first scholarship recipient in 1964, who retired in 2015 as vice president of talent negotiation and production recruitment at ESPN, is for students planning careers in broadcast journalism or sports journalism.

Primary emphasis is placed on career goals, writing ability, scholastic aptitude and overall achievement as measured by an applicant's high school transcript, class rank, academic awards, SAT scores and extracurricular activities.

Scholarship applications are available at www.ValleyPressClub.com, high school guidance offices, or by emailing NTassinari@TheBigE.com Applications may be sent by mail to Noreen Tassinari, VPC Scholarship Chair, Eastern States Exposition, 1305 Memorial Avenue, West Springfield, MA 01089 or electronically to NTassinari@TheBigE.com. The deadline for submissions is April 15. Over the course of five decades, The Valley Press Club has presented over \$130,000 in scholarships to eligible students.

The Valley Press Club consists of active and retired journalists and public relations professionals from corporate and nonprofit organizations.

Obituary

Marion Hastings Bonacci Convertino, 1929-2021

Marion Convertino passed away peacefully Sunday, March 21st surrounded by the love of her family. She was 1 of 17 children born on April 21, 1929 in Feeding Hills to the late Vivian and Philip Hastings. She leaves behind 4 siblings: Robert Hastings,Vivian Hill, Ruth Hastings and Arthur Hastings. Marion was predeceased by her 2 husbands Joseph Bonacci and Paul Convertino; daughters Vivian Bonacci and Theresa Convertino; and sons-in-law Edward Pirhala, Mark Vincze and William Kramer. No words can express how greatly she will be missed by her devoted children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. One of her favorite sayings was, "my family is the closest" and the reason being is because of her personal strength and character, as well as the example she set for all us to follow. She was kind and loving inside and out. She leaves behind her many "bosses" as she lovingly referred to her children: Karen Pirhala, John Convertino and girlfriend Sue, Linda Vincze, Angela Kramer and her boyfriend Jodhy, Frank Convertino and wife Claudia, Grace Narreau and husband Ronald, and Robert Boger and girlfriend Su. Her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren brought her immense joy and happiness. Her many "bosses" became chopped liver when the kids were around. Damian Vincze and wife Chrissie and their daughters Autumn, Charlotte and Violet; Mark Vincze and wife Erin and their children Alexis & Ollie Vincze and Lelia Risdon; Nicole and husband Allen St. Jean and their children Lizzie & Jake; Nick DePalma and wife Yara and their children Nicky & Camila; Erica and her husband Paul Szymaszek and their son Julian; Max Kramer & wife Marissa; Cierra Rouse; Ross Convertino and girlfriend Stephanie Gray and their daughter Myla; Haley Convertino; Jesse Convertino; Amber and her husband Aaron Davis; and Rachel Narreau. Marion worked as an LPN for many years at Heritage Hall and was well respected by fellow employees and residents. Marion enjoyed doing puzzles that were "humdingers" and playing her version of solitaire that ironically, she always won. Marion's family would like to thank the Wellington Memory Care Unit in Springfield for the care and love they provided her during her stay at assisted living, especially during the pandemic when visitation was on hold. She was very happy there which was a great comfort to her family. Marion experienced many hardships in her life but never let it get in the way of her happiness. She had a favorite saying when things did not turn out the way you hope, "That's the way the cookie crumbles." Services will be held at the convenience of the family. Memorial contributions may be made in Marion's name to St Jude's children's research, American Heart Association or any charity of your choice.

Colonial Forastiere Family Funeral Home is entrusted with final arrangements. www.forastierefuneralhome.com



Feline Friends benefits from bag fundraiser

AGAWAM – The Stop and Shop Community Bag Program, which launched in May 2019, is a reusable bag program that facilitates community support with the goal to make a difference in the communities where shoppers live and work.

Feline Friends Inc. Cat Sanctuary was selected as the April 2021 beneficiary of the program by store leadership at the Stop and Shop located at 57 Main Street, Westfield. Feline Friends Inc. will receive a \$1 donation every time the \$2.50 reusable Community Bag is purchased at that location

during April , unless otherwise directed by the customer through the Giving Tag attached to the bag.

Feline Friends Inc. Cat Sanctuary is a non-profit based in Feeding Hills. Learn more about Feline Friends Inc. by visiting www.felinefriendsinc.org. For more information about the Community Bag Program, go to: stopandshop.bags4mycause.com.

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Sat., March 13, 10 a.m.

Wed., March 24, 7 p.m.

Sat., March 27, 10 a.m.

Sat., April 3, 10 a.m.

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SPORTS

SOCCKER

Soccer alignments proposed for new statewide tourney format

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – Holyoke and Central will stand together as the only two schools from Western Massachusetts that will compete in Division 1 soccer under the new alignments that have been proposed.

This fall, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association will change to a statewide tournament. In an attempt to equalize the competition, Massachusetts will move from four to five divisions in most major sports, such as soccer, basketball, and baseball and softball.

According to the alignments that have been proposed, Holyoke and Central are the only schools in the region that have enough enrollment to be part of Division 1.

Many current Division 1 schools in the region will now move down to Division 2.

Among the Division 2 teams in soccer will be Agawam, Chicopee, Chicopee Comprehensive, Minnechaug Regional, Amherst, and Ludlow. All of these teams have

been playing in Division 1 for many years, and have competed in Division 1 tournaments at the regional and state level. Ludlow was a Division 1 state champion a couple of years ago.

Belchertown will be among the teams that will be featured in Division 3. This is not a change for those teams. They have been in Division 3 in recent years, though girls soccer has been playing Division 1 to improve its competition level. Belchertown won the boys Division 3 state championship in 2019.

South Hadley, which won a girls soccer Division 3 state title in 2019, will move to Division 4. Also included in Division 4 will be Mahar Regional.

Moving to the newly created Division 5 will be Palmer, Pathfinder, Monson, Granby, Ware, Quaboag, and North Brookfield.

In Central Mass., Tantasqua will be a part of Division 2, while Quabbin Regional will join Division 3.

The divisions the teams will be assigned

SOCCKER | page 9



Girls soccer will be a part of Division 2 as well.



Agawam boys soccer will play in Division 2 beginning this fall. PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Soccer playoffs will switch to a statewide tournament with 32 teams a part of the tournament.

RACING

Entry list growing as Icebreaker event nears

WATERBURY, Vt. — Connecticut's Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park is just over three weeks away from opening the 2021 Northeast Auto Racing season with the annual Icebreaker. The headlining \$10,000-to-win Icebreaker 125 on Sunday, April 11 continues to draw buzz and big names as the entry list grows leading up to the event.

Nearly 30 Tour-type Modified teams have registered for the debut of the Outlaw Open Modified Series. Even more are expected by the time the first green flag falls for qualifying. The list includes former track and series champions, many multi-time winners, and rising stars looking to start the season with a bang.

To no one's surprise, a huge contingent of racers from the "Modified Country" of Southern New England have entered. For-



The Icebreaker 125 is just a few weeks away and the entry list is piling up. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

mer NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour champions Doug Coby of Milford, CT; Bobby Santos III of Franklin, MA; and Ronnie Silk of Norwalk, CT are among the biggest names preparing for the season-opener.

Other touring series champi-

ons on the entry list are Chelmsford, MA's Jon McKennedy; Moosup, CT's Chris Pasteryak; and Woborn, MA's Anthony Nocella. Although NASCAR Cup Series regular Ryan Preece has not officially entered the Icebreaker, he

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BASKETBALL

WMA basketball program expands

WILBRAHAM – Wilbraham & Monson Academy's Boys Basketball program is excited to announce an expansion of its New England Championship-winning Boys Basketball program - with a newly created and named Varsity basketball team. The Varsity team will begin the 2021-2022 season as a Class C Associate member of the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council.

Wilbraham & Monson's current varsity team will be rebranded as a Prep level team when it opens defense of its New England Class AA championship. The Titans won the program's fifth New England Championship, and first in 34 years, in March 2020.

The varsity team will be run

under the direction of Prep Head Coach Mike Mannix and will be coached by newly hired Chris Iversen.

Iversen's basketball background includes extensive experience at numerous administrative levels in the Premier Basketball League, an American professional men's basketball minor league. He helped lead the Rochester (N.Y.) RazorSharks to seven league championships and was twice named as the league's Coach of the Year. Iversen joins WMA after holding a position as an assistant coach and co-director of player development at the United States Basketball Academy in Eugene, Oregon.

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Sports

SOCCER ■ from page 8

will determine what state tournament that team will have an opportunity to be a part of. With the number of divisions increasing, there will be more opportunities for teams to qualify, though there could be a lot of excessive travel in the early rounds of the tournament depending on what part of the state a team comes from.

Teams will have an opportunity to appeal their divisional placement, whether it before enrollment or competition reasons.

What has yet to be determined is what

a Western Massachusetts tournament may look like. While the MIAA will not sponsor a tournament going forward, the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference wants to sponsor a tournament. It is unknown how the competition will be aligned, but it could be difficult to place the teams according to division, with situations like having just Holyoke and Central in Division 1. The PVIAC had to put planning for sectional tournaments on hold due to the pandemic.

RACING ■ from page 8

has publicly expressed his interest in competing.

Plenty of weekly Modified warriors are also ready for the long-distance challenge. They include Berlin, CT's Keith Rocco, a seven-time Thompson Speedway champion, and Tolland, CT's Ronnie Williams, a two-time SK Modified champion at Stafford Motor Speedway. With 125 green-flag laps on the card, many factors will play into who ultimately takes home the big check.

"I think you're going to see a lot of different strategies in this type of race," Williams said. "I think a lot of guys will be pushing hard in the early laps of the race. It's the start of a new season, and a lot of guys haven't raced yet. I'm expecting a strong run out there. The No. 25 with Gary Casella always runs well at Thompson."

"You just have to play your cards right with all of the pit strategy and 125 laps that are all green flag laps," Rocco added. "Fuel is probably going to play a role in it for this one, too. There are a lot of aspects that are going to be part of trying to win the race. We always do really well in the open shows, from the SK Modifieds to the Tour Modifieds. Hopefully, we'll come out of the box strong to start the season."

However, the hunger for victory isn't just limited to Connecticut and Massachusetts. Racers from six different Northeast states already entered the Icebreaker 125, giving the event a regional flavor that speaks to its appeal among the Modified ranks.

New Hampshire racers Andy Shaw (Center Conway) and Trevor Bleau (Troy) live in an area typically dominated by Late Model-type cars. However, they're ready to make Modifieds the Granite State headliner for at least one day. Riverhead, NY's Eric Goodale is one of several drivers who are expected to do double-duty with the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour event at Virginia's Martinsville Speedway. Goodale's fellow Long Islander Artie Peterson III is also representing the Empire State.

Anthony Sesely is making the trip to Thompson from Port Monmouth, NJ. Earl Paules has an even long drive from Palmerston, PA. Patrick Emerling has the current "long haul" award, though, with a 432-mile

journey each way from Orchard Park, NY to drive Ted Anderson's #1CT.

The Icebreaker 125 is the first event in the new Outlaw Open Modified Series. A quartet of \$5,000-to-win Wednesday events are scheduled for June 16, July 7, August 11, and September 15. The season concludes with the return of the Thompson 300, a \$20,000-to-win event on October 9 and 10 as part of the annual World Series of Speedway Racing.

Drivers can still register for the Icebreaker 125. Outlaw Open Modified Series entry forms and rules are available at www.acttour.com/outlaw-open-modifieds. General event information can be found at www.acttour.com/thompson-speedway.

Thompson Speedway opens its 82nd season with the annual Icebreaker on Saturday, April 10 and Sunday, April 11. A total of 10 divisions will compete across two days of racing. Sunday's card features the \$10,000-to-win Icebreaker 125 for the Outlaw Open Modified Series. There's also a 40-lap ACT-type Late Model shootout plus the Limited Sportsman and SK Light Modifieds.

Saturday's six-division card is highlighted by the season-opening Thompson 75 for the PASS North Super Late Models. They're joined by the Sunoco Modifieds, NEMA LITES Midgets, EXIT Realty Pro Truck Challenge, Mini Stocks, and an 8-Cylinder Street Stock Open. An optional Test N' Tune practice day is slated for Friday, April 9 with all Icebreaker divisions welcome.

Adult general admission is \$30 for Saturday and \$35 for Sunday. Kids ages 12 and under are \$10 each day. Advance tickets are available at <https://happsnow.com/event/Thompson-Speedway-Motor-sports-Park-YHPQ>. Grandstand attendance is limited to 50% of capacity per Connecticut COVID-19 guidelines. Pit passes will be sold at the track.

For general Thompson Speedway inquiries and camping reservations, call (860) 923-2280, email oval@thompsons Speedway.com, or visit www.thompsons Speedway.com. You can follow Thompson Speedway on Facebook and Instagram at @ThompsonSpeedway or on Twitter at @ThompsonSpdwy.

BASKETBALL ■ from page 8

WMA's announcement follows its recent decision to reinstate ice hockey to the school. The program will start as a club-level team for boys and girls for the 2021-2022 winter season. The Academy is finishing a full year of full-time, on-campus classes with socially distanced classrooms and dining halls. Students and the entire WMA community are COVID-19 tested twice a week.

To learn more about WMA's boys varsity basketball program or any of the other Academy's offerings, visit www.wma.us/varsity or www.wma.us.

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Valley Wheel Baseball seeks new players

Headline: REGION – The Valley Wheel Over-30 Baseball League is looking for new players for the 2021 season, which is set to begin at the end of April. Players who are 28-years-old prior to June 1 are eligible to play in the league this season, however, only those 30 by June 1 are eligible to pitch. The league includes six teams and there is a 15-game season that begins on Sunday, April 25. Games are 12 Sundays, a special Mother's Day weekend Saturday game, and two weekday night games under the lights. The season ends the final week of July with

the playoffs for the top four teams during the first two weeks of August. Tryouts are set for the first three weekends in April. Tryouts will be Saturday, April 3, Sunday, April 11, and Sunday, April 18, all weather-permitting. A draft for new players will be held after the final tryout. All players bat and every player spends at least four innings in the field. The league will be playing with some minor modifications due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, please contact League Commissioner Jim Nason at wheel12@comcast.net.

Sign up for Quabbin Valley Baseball

REGION – The Quabbin Valley Baseball League is an age 28-and-over league which plays its games Sundays at 10 a.m. beginning in late April and concluding in late August. It is a six-team league and a 15-game schedule with all teams getting at least one playoff game at the end of August.

The league is seeking new players to join in the fun. The cost to play in 2021 is \$192.50 and registration can be found at www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Games are mostly being played this year in Easthampton and South Hadley. Players who wish to pitch in the league must be 30-years-old.

Sign-ups are active and players who are

not already on a team will be placed in a draft, currently scheduled to take place on Sunday, April 11.

The league's first games are tentatively scheduled for Sunday, April 25. For the 2021 season, there is a mask-wearing rule, as well as modifications that prohibit any type of spitting or close contact, and players are required to take out all trash they bring in with them. The league allows the use of BBCOR-certified -3 bats as well as wood bats. Games are nine innings and all players who participate get to hit and play the field. For more information or to contact someone from the league, go to the league's website.

Sign-ups now available for 2021 Relics softball

LUDLOW – The Western Mass Relics has opened registration for the 2021 Senior Softball Season. The Silver Division (age 50 to 64) has filled 36 of the 112 spots and the Gold Division (65-and-up) has filled 32 of the 96 spots. The registrations are accepted on a first come first serve basis. All our games are played at the Fish & Game in Ludlow. For further information or to register go to <http://www.western-massrelics.org>.

Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching "turleysports." We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow and share with your friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections in the coming weeks, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.



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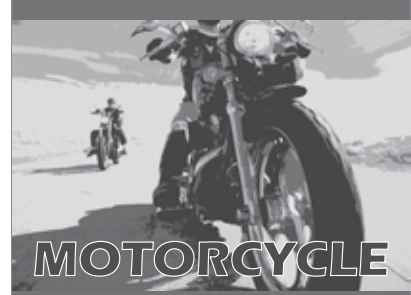


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Public Notices

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD21P0543EA
Estate of:
Eleanor A Zucco Geiger
Date of Death: 12/27/2020
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Christopher Romano** of Agawam, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.
The Petitioner requests that: **Christopher Romano** of Agawam, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in an **unsupervised administration**.
IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/21/2021**.
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the admin-

istration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 24, 2021
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
04/01/2021
**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD20P1459EA
Estate of:
Donald Felix Goudreau
Also known as:
Donald F Goudreau
Date of Death: 02/22/2020
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**
To all interested persons:
A Petition for **5/A Formal Adjudication of**

Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by **Jacob D Goudreau** of Springfield, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.
The Petitioner requests that: **Jacob D Goudreau** of Springfield, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in an **unsupervised administration**.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/19/2021**.
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance

and objection followed by an Affidavit of Objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 22, 2021
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
04/01/2021

**LEGAL AD
AGAWAM
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION**
The Agawam Conservation Commission will meet remotely, due to the COVID -19 restrictions, through **Zoom at 6:00 PM on Thursday, April 8, 2021**. The purpose of this meeting will be to hear the application of Sessions on a Request for Determination of Applicability for work at 51 Cosgrove Avenue.
By Order of
Henry A. Kozloski, Chairman
**AGAWAM
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION**
To join the webinar:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88322932383?pwd=Y-VdocFlkalJPdGhlTndaNmN-6Nno0UT09>
Passcode: 261321
Or Telephone:
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04/01/2021

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2021 TAX TIME

Form 1040

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Greek flag raised



The Bicentennial Greek Independence Day Flag raising ceremony in Springfield was held last week. Inset: State Sen. John Velis, Register of Probate Rosemary Saccomani, and Agawam City Councilor George Bitzas were part of the ceremony. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

SCHOOLS ■ from page 1

colleagues, gaining clearer pictures of strengths and needs within curriculums, strengthening teachers understanding of a broader learning continuum within each grade level, revamping assessments to focus on key content in a concise way, and increased comfort levels and usage of technology to support instruction.

The team also outlined things they are looking ahead to like the need to scaffold and differentiate things based on student needs, and adjusting scope and sequences based on progress during the current year. They are hopeful for the return and increase of small group instruction and intervention in schools, and they're focusing on how to pull more groups at the same time to avoid taking time from core instruction in the classroom.

Mayor William Sapelli thanked the coaches for their presentation and for their work in the schools.

"What you bring to our students and teachers is an invaluable resource, these coaching positions are so, so important," Sapelli said. "And I don't think enough people can appreciate what you really do on a daily basis, they don't understand what the coaches role is, so these types of reports are very helpful."

Hoffman also thanked the coaches who presented their report in person rather than online. Sapelli, Hoffman, and the coaches expressed excitement and readiness for the upcoming return to full in-person learning after the coaches' report.

How to submit legal notices

All legal notices to be published in the Agawam Advertiser News should be sent directly to notices@turley.com. Please indicate the newspapers and publication date(s) for the notice(s) in the subject line of your email. For questions regarding coverage area, procedures or cost, please call Jamie Joslyn directly at 413-283-8393, ext. 216.

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